



Never Again



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Chapter 1 by Jack Frost

The light of a single candle flickered against the smoke-tinted glass of the window, casting hazy light across his reaching hands. For the briefest moment that light caught his eye, and he paused. The window jack wrapped in itchy fingers, he felt the chill of it seeping through his gloves.

He'd thrown himself back into work, relying on the shadows and the satisfaction that came from filling his collection with other people's treasures to keep his mind off Erin. It barely worked.

But sometimes certain actions triggered the memory, a glimpse at his own forward stretched hand and he could see her falling again, the look in her eyes, release born from betrayal, freedom from the harsh reality that had been her life.

In their final confrontation, she said he never cared about her. That he used her just like all the rest.

He hadn't thought all that much about it at the time they were thrust upon each other, strung together by Basso in some attempt to give the girl a much-needed sense of guidance.

Reluctantly, he took her under his wing, taught her everything he knew, but there were some lessons that just couldn't be learned.

Erin was broken long before he met her.

It wasn't his fault.

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And yet... he felt guilty.

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